

August 12, 2005

QUARTERLY INPATIENT CENSUS

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides policy and procedures for the quarterly census of patients.

2. BACKGROUND: Quarterly census data is required each Fiscal Year to provide timely and accurate medical and administrative information on all VHA medical center patients including community nursing home patients. The information is used for: resource allocation, health care planning, performance monitoring, and for reports to Congress. Until VHA has the capacity to implement inpatient reporting of daily admission data, including diagnostic information, into the National Patient Care database (NPCD) for patients admitted, census continues to be required.

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy that the quarterly census be conducted on December 31, March 31, June 30, and September 30 at 11:59 p.m.; the census files are closed out at 6:00 p.m. Eastern time on January 19, April 19, July 19, and October 19.

4. ACTION: The Medical Center Director is responsible for ensuring that:

a. The census is completed for all bed occupants, including patients in community nursing home beds at VA expense as of 11:59 p.m. on December 31, March 31, June 30, and September 30.

b. Non-VA hospital bed patients, patients in state homes at the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) expense, and 1-day stay dialysis patients are excluded from the quarterly census.

c. The Chief, Health Information Management, or other appropriate official(s), serves as the facility Census Coordinator and has administrative responsibility for assuring the timely completion of the quarterly census.

d. Census information is reported and transmitted to the Austin Automation Center (AAC) using the Census Menu option of Version 5.3 of the Patient Information Management System (PIMS), Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA).

(1) Patch DG*5.3*643 adds the ability to complete census records for Non-VA Census' required.

(2) To ease the increased workload that is required to add Non-VA patients to the quarterly census, sites need to set up a monitor that reviews open Non-VA Patient Treatment File (PTF) records to ensure that the only Non-VA PTF records open are those for patients who are active

THIS VHA DIRECTIVE EXPIRES AUGUST 31, 2010

VHA DIRECTIVE 2005-034

August 12, 2005

at the time of the review. Sites can use the Fee Basis Census Status Report [DGPT FEE BASIS CENSUS STAT RPT] option sent with patch DG*5.3*643 to assist in the clean up of Non-VA PTF records.

e. The following procedures are undertaken at each VistA supported medical center:

(1) Patients to be completed for census can be found by using both Census Status Report [DGPT CENSUS STATUS REPORT] and Fee Basis Census Status Report [DGPT FEE BASIS CENSUS STAT RPT] menu options.

(2) If VA Form 10-7976D, Medical Staff Census Worksheet, is used, it does not have to be completed by a provider. It can be completed by a member of the coding staff.

(3) Census data is entered into the PTF record in VistA using the "Load/Edit PTF Data" option.

(4) All PTF screens for each census patient must be completed, as applicable, with the most current diagnosis(es) confirmed and any procedure(s) completed before or by the time the quarterly census is conducted.

(5) The PTF record is "closed for census" using the PTF 701 screen of the "Load/Edit PTF Data" option. Upon successful closing, the required data for the census is selected from the PTF record and the census record is created.

(6) The census record must be released for transmission to the AAC using either the PTF 701 screen of the "Load/Edit PTF Data" option or the "Release Closed Census Records" option.

(7) Census data must be transmitted to the AAC using the "Transmit Census Records" option.

(8) Census data must be transmitted on or after January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1, annually. Census records indicating error corrections must be corrected, closed, released, and transmitted in time for receipt by AAC before 6:00 p.m. Central time on January 19, April 19, July 19, and October 19, annually.

(9) PTF records of census patients discharged on or after January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1, must be closed, released, and transmitted to the AAC when they are completed.

5. REFERENCES: None.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: Director, VHA Health Information Management is responsible for the content of this Directive. Questions may be addressed to 760-777-1170.

7. RESCESSIONS: VHA Directive 2002-009 is rescinded. This VHA Directive expires August 31, 2010.

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